

The Alabama Sentry Program

The Purpose of the Alabama Sentry Program

- Governor Ivey is taking immediate action to address the acute safety challenge facing schools that do not currently employ a school resource officer (SRO). The Sentry Program is one step in the process of providing safety for students and staff in schools. It is an additional, voluntary tool for schools to meet their security needs.
- The Sentry Program will permit leaders of schools without an SRO to respond to active shooters by training to maintain a weapon in a secured safe. Unlike teachers, school administrators have complete access to their schools and are responsible for the safety of all students at the school, not a particular class.

The Design and Implementation of the Alabama Sentry Program

- The Sentry Program will be established immediately, through administrative action, under existing law. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), acting through the Governor's Securing Alabama's Facilities of Education (SAFE) Council, will develop a memorandum of understanding, implementation regulations, and guidance to participants. ALEA and ALSDE will establish guidelines for training requirements, stress tests, mental-health evaluations, and drug screenings.
- A school administrator must seek the approval of their superintendent, school board, and county sheriff to participate in the Sentry Program. By requiring the approval of local superintendents, school boards, and sheriffs, the program is unlikely to be established in areas where a majority of the people are opposed to it.
- No person may serve as a sentry who is not appointed as a deputy sheriff or reserve deputy sheriff pursuant to state law.
- School Safety Training and Compliance Teams will train school sentries with an ALEA-designed training module. Sentries will be trained at no cost to local systems. However, local school boards will have to pay for certifications, evaluations, and hardware for participating school sentries.
- The names of individuals, schools, and school systems participating in the Sentry Program will not be released to prevent undue influence from affecting an administrator's choice to participate.

Qualifications for Participation in the Alabama Sentry Program

- School administrators seeking to assume the duties of school sentry must possess a valid Alabama school administrator certificate and a valid concealed-carry pistol permit; must be appointed as a reserve sheriff's deputy; must be an active school administrator in a public elementary or secondary school without an SRO; and must pass a drug screening, a mental-health assessment, and a stress test. Sentries will be subject to random drug screenings, annual training, mental-health, and stress test recertification.
- ALSDE or ALEA may terminate a sentry's participation if he or she violates the terms of participation, the sentry is no longer fit for service, the sponsoring school district or county sheriff terminates participation, or if the sentry resigns. School sentry certification is not transferable from school to school or person to person. A school's participation in the program shall cease immediately if the school hires an SRO or if the local board of education or county sheriff terminates participation.

School Sentry Duties

- A school sentry's duties will be written to include "the use of lethal force to defend the students, faculty, staff, and visitors of his or her school from the threat of imminent bodily harm or death by an armed intruder." School sentries shall only exercise their duties in response to an armed intruder. School sentries will be covered by the state's sovereign immunity in the performance of their duties by the Educators Liability Trust Fund. In the event of an active shooter scenario, sentries will wear a distinctively marked, bullet-proof vest, known to law enforcement.
- School sentries, or their employing board of education, shall be responsible for acquiring and maintaining a secured safe, an approved weapon, ammunition, and a specially-designed bullet-proof vest.